Our readers may have observed in the public papers for some time past occasional notices of a proposed canal or thorough-cut communication between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, across the Isthmus which connects the two Americas. This great project, the importance of which has been duly appreciated by the navigating countries of the world, and been talked of from time to time for half a century or more, has lately, it appears, been revived with increased earnestness, and on the part of persons in England who in number and resources give promise that the gigantic work will at last be undertaken and carried forward to completion. Numerous notices of the scheme have appeared in the New York papers, and among them a letter from Washington in the Journal of Commerce, which was in most particulars accurate, but in others not entirely so. A gentleman well acquainted with the subject has taken the trouble to rectify these particulars and amplify some others, and has favored us with the article in the following revised shape.

The project of a ship canal across the Isthmus of Darien now engages the attention of enterprising men, both in Europe and in this country. It has also received the favorable attention of foreign Governments, and is now brought to the notice of our own Government. The project in its present matured state owes its origin in a great degree to an intelligent American, Dr. Black, a native of the State of Kentucky, and formerly a physician in Philadelphia, but for the last twenty years a resident of London. Dr. BLACK has conducted the matter to a highly promising condition, and still has the exclusive charge of it. He is now in this city, and has made such representations to the Government in relation to the subject as will induce it to direct a survey of the route by a suita-will induce it to direct a survey of the route by a suita-prise. This gentleman is at the head of the great engible corps, with a view to test its practicability. The project is one of vast interest to the whole commercial world, but particularly so to the United States. This country will share more largely and prominently in its and directness of purpose, and of liberal and compreher benefits than any other, even if we suppose that our expansive tendency should be arrested before we shall have absorbed the Isthmus itself and all the interoceanic communication. The sailing distance from New York to San Francisco by the Horn is about eighteen thousand miles, and by Darien it would be but five thousand miles. Neither railroads nor canals will suffice for the vast commerce that we shall soon have between the Atlantic and Pacific: though there will be full employment for as many of these as can be made, both within our own territory and what is now foreign territory.

The ship canal now proposed will be ample for the pur-

pose of permitting ships of the largest size to pass each other in continuous line, without delay, from ocean to ocean, as through a natural strait. An ordinary canal, with locks and feeders, would be attended with delay, and when a lock gets out of order vessels would suffer sedetention, men would be exposed in a tropical climate to disease, and commodities to deterioration. To conceive the special importance of this work to the United States it is only necessary to reflect, to use the language of the memorial which the Memphis Convention ddressed to Congress on the subject of a Pacific railway, that "the Gulf of Mexico, with its twin-born, the Carib bean Sea, drains the most extensive and fertile system of river basins in the world; that this intertropical sea is supported by a back country that embraces a greater variety of climate than all the commercial rivers put together in the Old World; a back country so large that it could contain all the valleys of all the rivers of Europe and Africa, with half those of Asia, that discharge themselves into the commercial ports of the ocean. The river basins of Europe, Asia, and India contain 3,850,000 square miles; those which supply this intertropical sea of America embrace an area greater by more than half a million of square miles." A market-way to the Pacific Ocean is to be supplied for all this immense region, and for this purpose, as well as for the opening of the commerce of the Pacific, a ship canal is necessary. Even a number of railways would be inadequate for the commercial operations of the United States. The Memphis Convention, while they show the advantages of the contemplated railroad across the continent, urged also the necessity of a ship canal or railroad across the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, Nicaragua, or Panama, or across them all.

For the last three centuries the interoceanic communi-cation across the Islamus has engaged the attention of not in one but in many channels, by the people of this great Republic. The commercial and social and politi-cal interests that require most our consideration have been here gradually growing up, while the Isthmuses were left unexplored and almost uninhabited. The discovery by Columbus of a new world was, as even he himasidered, incomplete until a channel should be found for an interoceanic communication between the two worlds. But this final consummation of his work was, or I am mistaken, foreshadowed to him in a vision while on a sick bed on the river Belen, when a voice said to him, "God has made your name great, and given you the keys to unbar the gates of the ocean."

The celebrated letter of Lieut. M. F. MAURY to the delegates of the Memphis Convention remarks that " with ship-canal across the Isthmus the raft which floats down the Mississippi river, or the boat for navigating the ois canal, might, on arriving at New Orleans and not finding a market there, stick up a pole for a mast, and, setting sail, go to the Sandwich Islands, or Manilla, and perhaps to Asia. Getting through the gulf to the canal would be the most difficult part of the voyage." By use of a ship-canal vessels laden with the produce of our river basins, or coal vessels from the Chesapeake, and ships heavily laden with merchandise from New York and Boston, may reach the markets of China, India, and New Holland, and with much less expense of outfit, and with but a fourth of the crew which is required to take them around Cape Horn.

Lieut. Maury says that in sixty instead of one hundred and fifty days the voyage from our Northern ports to Chins might be performed by the Isthmus canal, and then the ship might have the choice of two routes homeward, either around the Cape of Good Hope or taking the same course as in the outward voyage. We find that all the winds and ocean currents, as Mr. Maury shows, seem to favor the Isthmus canal route.

In this Mediterranean of the new world what sources of power, wealth, and greatness, exclaims Mr. Maury, do we not see clustering? "A ship canal," he says, "would make it the focus of the world's commerce. Here the commerce of the Atlantic would converge, from here the commerce of the Pacific would diverge; and ships deeply laden, ships from the four corners of the earth, would crowd into it." Mr. Maury speaks only of projects for a ship canal across the Isthmus of Panama, and of the practicability of the Nicaragua route for a ship canal. does not confine his views, however, to any particular route, but looks to any route that may be found practicable and with good harbors.

The Committee of the Memphis Convention wind up their report with the remark that "an Isthmus Ship Canal, properly guarantied and regulated, would make the commercial nations of the earth dependant on the United States to such a degree as materially to lessen the chances and liabilities of ever involving this country in war.

The facts above given will suffice to show that in the project of the Darien Ship Canal, the United States, as a country, has a deeper interest than all the rest of the world beside, and therefore ought to take a leading part in the measures by which its practicability is to be test ed, and also in its ultimate prosecution and manage-

The next questions are, whether the proposed Darien Ship Canal is practicable? and, if so, by what means it is to be made

As to the first point, we have such information as render it extremely probable that this is the spot that Providence designates for the gate between the two oceans, and that nature has done half of the work to our hands. The partial examinations that have been made have led intelligent and inquiring men to the opinion that a gut or strait can here be cut, so us to afford a transit for ships between the two oceans.

Very little knowledge of the topography of this Isthmus of Darien could be found in the Spanish archives. The Spaniards themselves knew little about it, and they were proverbially jealous of the promulgation of any know-ledge concerning the coasts or the interior of their American possessions. They used even to falsify their charts, with a view to deceive navigators who might attempt to follow their steps. But there exists a Spanish tradition that the tidal waters of the two oceans approached each other more nearly between Port Escoses on the Atlantic and the Gulf of San Miguel on the Pacific than in any

other part of the Isthmus.

The Buccaneers succeeded the Monks before their system of internal improvement could be carried out beyond

Mindir gos how to prevent the Spaniards from gaining a foothold in the country; that is, by preventing them from erecting any buildings for shelter, and by attacking them as soon as their supplies of provisions were exhausted. Thus the interior of the country remained unknown and unvisited for a long time. At length, in 1692, Mr. Patterson, a Scotchman, the same who was the founder of the Bank of England, made a settlement on the Caribbean shore of the Isthmus, on a harbor, at a place which he called Port Escoces. This settlement was made in view of opening a communication between the two oceans, and establishing a trade with China, Japan, and the South Sea Islands, and Mr. Patterson had procured for that purpose a subscription of over half a million of pounds, an immense sum for that time. But the jealousy of the East India Company was excited against this settlement and the enterprise connected with it, and, it being sup posed that it would prejudice their monopoly, they per suaded the King to withdraw his protection from it, in fine, it was broken up. It does not appear that Mr. Patterson ever succeeded in exploring the interior, or in effecting a passage across the Isthmus. The country was left again to the undisturbed possession of the Mindingo Indians, on the Caribbean shore, and on the Pacific side to some few inhabitants of a mixed race.

Baron Humboldt gave a new impulse to scientific in-uiry by his work, in which he urged the importance and the feasibility of interoceanic communications across some of these Isthmuses. His theory was that the great chain of mountains, the Cordilleras, that extends through the continent down to the lowest point of the Isthmus which connects it with South America, must, when it reaches the narrow passage, be broken into hills or spurs, and of diminished height. The physical fact that the height of mountains must be proportioned to their base confirms this theory.

Next, Louis Napoleon, whose confidence in his own star led him to believe that he was to achieve some great act in the world's drama, turned his attention to this subject, and especially with a view to a canal by the Nicaragua route, which, according to the then existing informa tion, was the most feasible route. He wrote a book on

Further attention was called to the Darien route a few years ago by the report of an Irish physician, Dr. Cul-len, who had visited Darien on the Pacific side, and at the Gulf of San Miguel found a Scotchman who had there established himself as a boat-builder. This Scotchman informed him of the Spanish tradition in favor of a ship canal across this part of Darien.

But even before this event Dr. Black had turned his

attention to this matter, and finding the subject entertained by Sir Charles Fox, he and Mr. Lawrence, then our neering concern, the same who executed the contract for ouilding the Crystal Palace-a remarkable man, of eminent character in every part of Europe, of great energy sive views. Sir Charles entered earnestly into the inqui ry; and here, in fact, the enterprise took a practical d rection, and its management was placed in the hands of Dr Black. Two civil engineers, Mr. Lionell Gisborne, a dis tinguished engineer, and his assistant, Mr. Forde, were sent out to Darien to make an exploration of the country and their report was very favorable so far as it went. The particulars are these: The engineers proceeded from Port Escoces towards the Gulf of San Miguel, and dis covered a river which flowed towards the bay. They followed it up towards its sources, where they were taken prisoners by the Indians, who are yet jealous of the visits ing course to the Indian village on Caledonia Bay, which they found to be a very fine harbor, about five miles west of Port Escoses, when they were dismissed, with the al-monition that if they came again they would not get off so easy. They then proceeded by the Panama route down to San Miguel on the Pacific side, and surveyed Darien harbor, one of the most safe and commodious harbors in the world, and perfectly easy of access. They went up the river Savana from this bay, and found it to be thirty six feet deep for seven miles. From this point they followed the stream and its tributary, the Lara, to their ources, and to the water-shed of the other side of the Isthmus. The height of the dividing ridge between the rivers running into the Atlantic and Pacific Mr. Gisborne found to be about one hundred and fifty feet. They also brought back specimens of the rock on the route; and geologists have corroborated Mr. Gisborne's opinion that the cutting would be through stratified rock, which would afford good sides for the canal and be easy to work. The line for the canal would be nearly straight, and its whole length would be, from Caledonia Bay to the navi. gable waters of the river Savana, thirty-three miles. The

listance from port to port would be forty miles. It is estimated that the cost of the ship canal would be seventy-five millions of dollars, and would be completed in less than eight years. The plan is to make it one hundred and sixty feet wide and thirty feet in depth. other feature of the plan is to put labor enough at once on the whole route, so as to hasten its completion, and to protect the laborers from their own imprudence by an organized system of discipline; to shelter them under awnings while at work, for cotton canvass is cheaper than

quinine and calomel.

A privilege for the purposes of the construction and the world; but it seems now to have been left in the or-der of Providence to be accomplished thoroughly, and of the world, nor a source of unreasonable emolument, but to charge such a rate of toll as will pay the interest on the capital invested.

Louis Napoleon, in the interview which he had with United States and England in a guaranty of dividend. But the projectors will undertake the work without any other guaranty than is afforded by the wants of commerce. Anample amount of English capital for the com-pletion of the enterprise can, it is believed, be procured. It would therefore appear that both of the which are suggested by the propositions of Dr. Black are satisfactorily solved. There is good reason to believe the work to be practicable, and it can be executed by a company, American and English, and by means to be ob-

tained chiefly in Europe.
Under these circumstances Dr. Black proposes that his wn country should take the lead in the matter by an than his scissors in the composition of this book. official survey. The exploration by Messrs. Gisborne and Forde was a private affair. No survey has been made or ordered by the British Government. It is now intended that the Government of the United States should undertake to survey the route, and thus enable our citizens to judge of the expediency and practicability of the enterprise. Should the report of our engineers be favorable, it is proposed by Dr. Black that, in the organization of the company, one-half of the Board of Directors shall be American.

## COLLISION AND MIRACULOUS ESCAPE.

About 6 o'clock, Wednesday evening, the express train from Buffalo came in collision with a tree blown across the track, three-quarters of a mile east of Springfield, a station twenty-five miles west of Erie. The severe gale from the Lake had torn up a hemlock two feet in diameter, and cast it angularly over the track. The tree struck the rails about twenty feet from its roots. The evening was dark and stormy. The accident occurred in the woods, which rendered objects less distinct. The train had been delayed some hour and a half at Erie, waiting for the arrival of the Buffalo train. When the

miles per hour. The crash was awful. The tree, two feet in diameter, was broken in three places and shivered as if struck by thunderbolt. The locomotive was smashed to pieces and destroyed. It turned over and over three times. The boiler was broken, letting the steam and scalding water out, to add to the alarm and danger. The tender and two baggage cars were hurled upon the fragments of the omotive, and smashed into one common wreck.

The first three passenger cars, filled with people, were dashed upon the ruins of the baggage cars and engine. They were badly broken and turned bottom side up. last three cars of the train were not thrown from the

track, nor very badly disabled.

The horror and confusion of the scene were indescribable. The train had over four hundred passengers. The shock hurled them from their seats and piled them up among seats in terrible confusion. This collision occur red before the engineer had time to whistle down breaks. let off steam, reverse the motion, or even jump for his own life. He was pitched out head foremost into the ditch among the limbs. The fireman followed suit, and the baggage masters piled after them, all of whom received severe flesh bruises, but, strange to say, escaped instant death, and managed to crawl from under the ruins of broken cars and fragments of smashed baggage. But, more miraculous still, none of the passengers were killed or even had broken bones. Many received slight injuries,

and all were more or less shocked and scared. The train made three or four rebounds and advance after striking the tree, before it came to a halt, each of which added "confusion worse confounded" to the general crash and panic among the passengers. The screams, yells, and shouts that filled the night air, after the accident, were horrible. The men behaved with less coolness

and presence of mind, in many cases, than the women. Immediately after the smash the conductor and break men started for Springfield station to stop the express train going east, which would be due in a few minutes, and made no stop at that point. They barely succeeded in reaching the station and holding up a red light be-fore the train came thundering along. Had it not been stopped in a minute more another and more terrible colthis cance navigation, and the Buccaneers leagued with the Mindingo Indians to drive out the Spaniards, which train, and proceeded back to this city yesterday morning. [Cleveland Democrat.

NOTES ON NEW BOOKS.

A MANUAL OF GREEK LITERATURE, from the Ear lest Authentic Periods to the Close of the Byzantine ha. By CHARLES ANTHON, LL.D., &c. New York: Larper & Brothers; 1853.

The literary history of France records 11 ancedote which commemorates the wit and humor of the facetious Piron, but none better than the following: On a certain occasion Voltaire was reading a new play of his, the Semiramis, to a auditors, among whom was this prince of wags. The tragedy contained a good many verses adrottly purloined from Corneille and Racine. Every time one of these came from the lips of Voltaire, Piron made erionsa very low bow, with the greatest possible mess. At last Voltaire, out of patience. serving a mocking smile on every body's li Piron the reason of his bowing. The Burg mdian poet immediately replied, without any app grance of premeditation, "Keep on, Monsieur, do mind me; it is only a custom of mine always salute my acquaintances." Semiramis was played some time afterwards, but with very little success! taire meeting Piron in the lobby of the heatre, asked him what he thought of his tragedy now? "I think you would like very well for me to be the author of it," politely replied the wag, at the same time bowing himself out of the apartment.

Now, if our politeness was any thing like that of the merry Burgundian, we should have found frequent occasions for its exercise in the perisal of Dr. Anthon's "Manual of Greek Literature" Indeed, we have been surprised to find how many of our acquaintances the Doctor has succeeded in erowding within so small a space. It is the we sometimes find them a little disguised, and occupy ing positions in which we had never expected to meet them; still it should do us good to recognise their old and familiar faces; and if of friends and the pleasure they impart the role is "the more the merrier," then, indeed, should we be constrained to go into exstacies over Dr. Anthon's book But, as it is, all the pleasure we might have derived from meeting our old friends is mered by the inhospitality with which their host treats hem before our very eyes. The poet Marvell, in his coicature of Holland, delivers himself of a rather forcedallusion to the aquatic life and affinities of its inhabitans, by saying that the fish appears at the board of Iollander

"\_\_\_\_a guest, not as a meat;" but the witty Butlerfinishes the picture by declaring that the natives of this 'land that rides at anchor' ..\_\_\_\_ped, like cannibals, on other fishes,

And serw their cousins-german up in dishes.' It seems to usthat Dr. Anthon has been guilty of a kind of literary camibalism in his treatment of a good many of our acquintances; for, instead of meeting them as the table; and though they seem to be scientifically skewerel, roasted, and devilled, we have nevertheless found it impossible to excite a very keen appetite for the Doc-

tor's viands, these friends of ours, that is.

To change our simile, the present work is the most perfect specimen of the literary mosaic which has ever fallen under our observation. Visiters to the Crystal Palace in New York have, we doubt not, all been detained to admire the curiously inlaid tables on exhibition in the Italian department, and in gazing on their polished surfaces have wondered at the labor and skill which, by the seamless juxtaposition of ten thousand pieces of parti-colored the overwhelming tide of Roman domination that once wood, can represent landscapes and battle scenes with poured over it-evidences which, after the lapse of two almost as much distinctness and vividness as if the colors | thousand years since its subsidence, attest the widespread had been faid on from the pencil of the painter. Dr. Anthon's present work occupies the same place in literature as these inlaid tables in art; it is a miracle of tesselation, but it is nothing more.

Doctor Anthon does not make any secret of his obligations in compiling the volume before us, and we therefore are by no means disposed to taunt him with plagiarism. In his preface he more than hints at the "rich materials' which have been obtained from the stores of German crudition, and others of no less value from the productions of Donaldson, Pritchard, Winning, and Mure, among English scholars. The earlier part of the work, we learn, "is based" in a great measure upon the admirable history of Greek Literature by C. O. Müller, and upon the labors of Mure and Jhne. The biographical sketches tionary of Greek and Roman Biography edited by Dr. Smith." "Valuable materials have also been obtained of his own in this book, with its five hundred and eighty pages, Dr. Anthon is not so accommodating as to inform us, though from a pretty extended inspection we should judge that all the original matter is comprised in the preface at the beginning and in the index at the end. It is possible there may be something besides "extracts" in the body of the work; but so much which at first we suspected of being Dr. Anthon's has turned out, on further examination, to be somebody else's, that we begin to doubt if the distinguished author used any thing more

This is not the first time, we believe, that Dr. Anthon has honored the labors of others by a flattering notice in his preface and their incorporation in the body of his books. A few years ago he published an edition of the "Germania and Agricola" of Tacitus, which proved to be nothing more than a translation of a German edition of the same classic by one Dr. Billerbeck, with a few subsidiary interpolations from other sources. An examination of Cicero's " De Senectute, De Amicitia," &c., as published by Dr. A., will elucidate what he means by "basing" a work upon that of a preceding author; for this work purported to be "based" on one of Dr. Smith's, but every body else thought it was copied entire. If all property was like some of Dr. Anthon's literary property we would not dare for a moment to contest Monsieur

Proudhon's proposition, " la propriété, c'est le vol." The number of the books which Dr. Anthon has sent from the press would alone be sufficient to create a suspicion in the minds of thinking men that they were not the product of a very mature or well-digested scholarship. collision happened it was moving at the velocity of forty To do so much and yet to do it well is clearly beyond the compass of any scholar who has a high-minded conception of what is meant by authorship, and who is too proud to retail at second-hand the ideas of others, however distinguished. In our younger days, and before we had come to understand that books were sometimes made with quite as little wisdom as it required to govern the world according to the idea of the old Swedish Chancellor, we were wont to fancy that the learned author of so many books, from the " First Latin Lessons" to the ponderous Lexicon, must be a sort of literary Argus, endowed with a hundred eyes to read, and a Briareus, blest with a hundred hands to write. But we have long since ceased to wonder at Dr. Anthon's fertility in authorship. A man may have as many children as he pleases if he is not at all particular about adopting other folks' as his own. We have no doubt that Dr. Anthon is a man of very considerable classical attainments, and his library of classical authors we should judge to be very complete. But he seems never for a moment to think of digesting But he seems never for a moment to think of digesting and assimilating his literary acquisitions. He always thinks and writes in the words of another. In this he resembles the English clergyman, Kippis, a man of some note in his day, and of whom his friend, Ronert Hall, once remarked that he had laid so many books on his head that his brains could not work.

In examining the present work of Dr. Anthon we have been surprised to discover how many different pages treating on the same subject. His treatise on the Homeric question, for instance, is a chef d'auere in this line. We are lost in admiration at the tact and skill displayed in patching together by piecemeal a narrative and argument derived from about a dozen different writers, the several scraps being quite artistically dovetailed into each other. We suppose that long practice must have given Dr. A. great facility and fluency in the selection of feit \$5 and \$10 notes on the Farmers' and Drovers' Bank appropriate "extracts" from a variety of authors on any of Somers, Westchester county. They were committed given subject; but to us it seems almost as troublesome | for further examination.

amalgum in literature must possess the same properties as the celebrated Corinthian brass which the ancient metallurgists compounded from several different constituents, the whole forming a new metal more valuable than either of the separate ingredients which entered into its composition. In this view, however, we think the Doctor is mistaken; for, despite his skliful adjustment of the excerpts which he has so profusely culled from "erudite Germans and others," we must confess to a feeling of occasional dissatisfaction at the perception of incongruities which even Dr. Anthon's plastic art has not availed to conceal. Still we are constrained to admit that Dr. Anthon generally shows great good taste in his selections, and, if he seems to have a fancy for literary patch-work, it is equally true that he usually selects the best materials for such purposes. There are many good points in

the book before us; for how could it be otherwise in a

Greek literature as Mure, Grote, Brown, Müller, Jhne,

it will not be without its advantages to those who cannot

to compour a tack in this way as to write it out of one's own head. Dr. Anthon evidently thinks that such an

consult the original authorities; but, for ourselves, if we had been the compiler of this book, we are sure, to borrow the wit of Piron, that we would like very well for Dr. Anthon to be known as the maker of it. But the polemies of criticism are not at all to our liking. Turn we, therefore, to consider a question suggested by the work before us, to answer which, however, forms no part of its object. How has it come to pass that, with all its admitted superiority over the Latin, the literature of Greece has never enjoyed the same popularity or diffusion among us as its more fortunate rival? The greater difficulty of its acquisition is not the only reason why the Grecian language has been postponed for the Latin. Many other causes have combined to produce the same result. The later prevalence of the Roman language and civilization has caused their influence on succeeding ages to be more visibly operative, and has there-

fore invited to a familiarity with the literature most immediately related to our own, not only the classical scholar, but every one who makes the least pretensions to a knowledge of the nearest causes to which our modern civilization owes much of its peculiar development. The Roman dominion, besides, was not only more general and extended than that of Greece, but also more transforming in its influence over subject nations. The ancient Greek, like the modern Frenchman, seemed to be endowed with a faculty for winning the confidence and respect of alien nationalities, without, however, being able to found on his conquests a vast empire with a homogeneous civilization. The territorial acquisitions of Rome, on the contrary, were not like the fabled conquests of a Sesostris or a Bacchus: neither were they so transient as those of the young Macedonian conqueror. Over the people whom she had first smitten with the sword she afterwards exguests at the banquet to which he invites us, we find that tended the beneficent shield of her laws, and deprived they actually compose all the meat that is to be seen on them of a distinctive nationality only to make them citizens of a world-wide empire. Wherever the Roman conquers he inhabits, says Seneca. The language and institutions of her colonies were gradually assimilated to those of the parent city, and consequently we see the Punic dialect of Africa melting away before the Roman tongue, until it eventually sank into desuetude and left no trace behind save that which is preserved in a comedy of Plau-

tus, while the Celtic was driven into the mountain fastnesses of Wales, of Cornwall, and of Armorica, to find an asylum among their rude and unconquered peasantry. To this day the face of Europe is strewed with evidences of prevalence of the mighty flood. The language of the Eter-

nal City still forms the key to half the spoken tongues of the continent, while the rescripts and decrees of her emperors, interwoven with the dogmas and institutions of the feudal system, are still recognised in the jurisprudence of Southern Europe; and it is as late as the 16th century that the Latin was the language of ordinary inercourse and of diplomatic communication, being used alike in the schools, the synods of divines, and the courts Thus it has happened that the language, and with it

the literature, of Rome has in a measure supplanted, or rather overlaid, that of Greece. During the darkness of not so the Latin. Boccaccio informs us that during this Greek characters; and Hallam states that from the sixth to the fourteenth century not a line is quoted from any Greek poet in the literature of the times, such as it was shole western world seems to have was indebted to Grecian inspiration for the few Latin authors which here and there some solitary monk immured from Clinton, Schöll, Bernhardy, Bode, and many others in his cloister delighted to study and transcribe; for durthe projectors of this enterprise, offered to unite with the of the most eminent European scholars." What there is ing the tenth and eleventh centuries, the darkest period of mediaval times, the literature of Rome was not entirely neglected; and though many a classic parchment sed to make room for a commentary of St. August tin or a legend of St. Nicholas, yet not a few of the mo-nastic order were as much distinguished by their devotion to classical studies and the elegance of their tran scriptions as was the majority of the clergy by a barbaric indifference to these choicest remains of ancient genius. Many of the Latin authors were translated by these studious men into the lingua volgare of Italy—a work in which the Carthusian vied with the Cistercian. But the language of the Grecian bards and philosophers, of thousand-souled" Homer, and Plato, "the divine," all as unintelligible as the sacred cypher of Egypt. Even in the later and better days of Petrarch we find him lamenting that Homer to him "was dumb, or rather that he was deaf to the majestic tones of the blind old bard." And on the revival of learning and letters in the 15th century, the Italians being ignorant of the Greek tongue, of course suffered all works in that language to lie untouched in the dusty alcoves of the monastic libraries, while at this period the monks were passionately engaged upon the Latin authors in the literary drudgery of transcription and emendatory criticism, washing away from the long neglected MSS, the dust and canker of time. And not only was the Greek tongue thus forestalled by the Latin from the necessities of the case, but its study was for a long time positively prohibited by the spiritual powers, and all monkish students were exhorted to acquiesce in their blissful ignorance of this heretical speech, for Greek," said the reverend fathers, devoutly crossing "is the language of the devil." mus introduced the study of the prohibited tongue in the English University at Cambridge he encountered a fierce tempest of obloquy and denunciation, while at Oxford, where it had been patronized by Grocyn and Linacer during the reign of Henry VII, the learned "fellows" of that conservative institution divided themselves into hostile iterary parties, under the denomination of "Greeks' and "Trojans," the former advocating the study of the tongue and the latter opposing. Between these two factions a paper warfare was long waged of the most animated character, and exceeding in the virulence of its scurrility any thing we remember up to the recent division which has divided the harmonious Democracy into "Hards" and "Softs." The "Trojans" were especially vigorous in the prosecution of their literary skirmishings, and were by no means choice in the epithets they affixed to the adverse party, styling them indiscriminately "preachers of damnable heresies, and winnowers of the levil's chaff." When Erasmus returned to Germany after his short sojourn in England he was regarded by the pious Dominicans of Louvain as one who had bartered away his soul to taste of the forbidden fruit—the con- deaths on board. The total number of emigrants arrivonium damonum," as Grecian literature was politely called by the theologians of Leipsic. Dr. Faust, with his mysterious red-letter bibles, was not shunned more suspiciously than this "learned Theban," who laid the egg that Luther hatched. And when Reuchlin, the first storm and blow from the eastward. Her decks drifted who mastered the language among the Germans, adven-tured to speak a word in its favor, he was persecuted by

forever, and Grecian literature was soon successfully studied under Chrysolorus, Bessarion, and others of the learned men who fied from Constantinople on its occupation by the Turks; but it was not re-installed in its due pre-eminence over the Latin either in Italy or any other ountry, nor has it yet been up to the present day. The force of time and circumstances is against it; and though it must ever occupy the highest place in our systems of he can string together from as many different authors, in classical culture and education, it would be too much to expect that it will ever be so generally studied as the Latin. Still there will always be those who, like the liberal-minded and gentle Petrarch, will prefer to slake their thirst at the "wells undefiled" of Grecian eloquence, or, as he expresses it, ex ipsis Gracci eloquii

> Six persons were arrested in New York on Tuesday charged with participation in the circulation of counter

TO THE EDITORS.

OCTOBER 29, 1853. GENTLEMEN: In your paper of October 11th, over the ignature S. E. C., some examples of curious properties numbers are given. Such publications, if they lead to greater attention to the theory of numbers than it The subject has been too much neglected by teachers, and there exists amongst them generally a gross ignorance of it, unless there has been recently a great improvement. From the high attainments and deserved reputation of several gentlemen who have within a few ears past prepared treatises upon arithmetic for our chools, it is possible that there has been such improvement. Formerly, with rare exceptions, arithmetic was taught in this country only as an art, and the books upon it then in use possessed little or no claim to a supply their defects. book which is literally made up from such writers on

With regard to the examples alluded to, would it not

be more correct to say, that the properties they illus-Smith, &c. ? If any one is willing to make such a book out trate are not absolute properties of numbers, but are reof the disjecta membra of these excellent authors, we suppose lative to the system of notation to which they are apnumeration which prevails, has led to the adoption of erroneous ideas of peculiar properties of that number. The only reason for the system, with that base, having been almost uniformly adopted, and which few or none sports in the breeze such a murky and dishonored flag. will question, is, that man is furnished with ten fingers, which served him for his primitive instruments for calcu lation.\* Another number might have been selected for the base which would be more convenient and present more advantages than the decimal. The properties which appear to belong to the number nine, in the examples iven, and in numerous others of like character which might be adduced, would shift to another number, if apolied to a different system of notation, constructed upon a like principle to the decimal as to local value of the digit, but to a different base; and then the number nine would fail to exhibit those properties. This may be easily verified by trial, and is the reason for considering such properties as relative to the system of notation, and not bsolute properties of the number.

It is true that it has been stated by high authority that "the theory of numbers is not of much immediate practical utility in the applications of mathematics," and is little studied by a large class of mathematicians deeply versed in the higher analysis," and "is in fact an isolated part of mathematics." Such expressions are likely to give an idea of the unimportance and insignificance of this branch of science, which they could hardly have been intended to convey, and which it does not

We have now treatises upon the theory by many of the ablest mathematicians, by La Grange, Lagendre, Barlow, Cauchy, Gauss; the last of whom has furnished new and elegant formulas, and has devised the construction of new tables (new in principle) which abridge labor in astronomical computations, and in others of a like character. Perhaps it is presumptuous in one not acquainted with his works, and possibly not possessing the capacity to justly appreciate them, to suggest that his investigations in this theory have led him to these improvements It may be equally so to suggest that similar investigations bore much part in the invention and construction of that wonder of art and science, the engine of Babbage.

Although this theory presents some questions of a very abstruse character, requiring for their management great penetration and ingenuity, and a familiarity with the higher analysis, still a moderate acquaintance with the elementary branches of mathematics will suffice to attain knowledge of many of its methods, processes, and results: Est quoddam prodire tenus, si non datur ultra;' for such knowledge will not only gratify a rational curiosity, but will give clearer and more comprehensive views of arithmetical operations, and increased ability for comprehending and investigating many physical questions.

The object, however, of this note is to solicit you to revail on S. E. C. to apply his arithmetic to the elucidation of a statement made in a very extraordinary work. which appeared something more than two years ago, entitled "A System of Mechanical Philosophy, being a Research into the Laws of Force." The statement will be found on page 312, where, speaking of falling bodies, it says: "If we divide the space of the perpendicular fall into equal parts, the velocity of the first part will be as 1, of the second 3, of the third 5, and so on." At school was confirmed by all experiments, from those of Galileo at the tower of Pisa to the performances of Atwood's

In the nomenclature of our Anglo-Saxon ancestors 00 was hund-neon-tig, 100 bund-teon-tig, 110 hund-endlufon-tig. You, or any of your correspondents who live in a region where lexicons and vocabularies are accessible, will confer a favor by informing me whether the hund imports hand, and tig time. It is stated that in one of the earlier Gothic languages taihum or taihund was the name of 10. If so, the A. S. tyn (10) was probably from that source, instead of being from the Greek deka, as Webster suggests. The import of taihund is two hands. May not, then, the terms above given signify all on the hands nine times, ten times, eleven times, &c.? The numeration of the Anglo-Saxon gives evidence that at one time their system was not upon a single base, like our decimal system, but double. Traces of the same character may be found in our vernacular, and in the French

and various other languages. t Leaving out of view the difference of velocity due different distances from the centre of the earth, and also the effect of the resistance of the air, and taking the vecity of the first part for the unit, then (under the case as stated) the mean velocity of the successive equal parts or spaces will be . Of the first ...

Of second ......sq. root of 2, minus 1 ..... =2.414,&c. Of third ......sq. root of 3, minus sq. root of 2=3.146, &c.

Of fourth.....sq. root of 4, minus sq. root of 3=3.732,&c. If the time of descent be divided into equal portions, then (the space fallen through during the first portion being taken for the unit) the spaces described in the successive equal times will be as 1, 3, 5, 7, and so on; and consequently the mean relocities of the successive equal times will have the same ratios.

## NEW YORK ITEMS.

NEW YORK, NOVEMBER 16. The packet ship American Union, from Liverpool, which ort she left on the 8th of October, arrived yesterday. She brought out of port 629 passengers, seventy-five of whom, with five of the crew, died on the passage with cholera. The ship Centurion, also arrived from Liverpool, lost thirteen on her passage; and the ship Statesman, deaths on board. The total number of emigrants arriving yesterday was 2,067.

The ship Western World, which got ashore on Squam Beach (N. J.) some two or three weeks since, went to pieces about 8 o'clock last Sunday evening, during the ashore, all broken to pieces, many of which were wrap-ped around with dry goods which had composed a part of the cargo. Her bottom, with a considerable amount of iron in it, is out of sight under water. It is not doubted that the iron will be recovered; but there will not be a sufficient value saved to cover expenses, so that in effect both vessel and cargo are a total loss. The ship was valued at \$80,000, on which there is insurance to the amount of \$70,000. Cargo valued at about \$180,000, which is nearly or quite all covered by insurance.

The Cunard steamship Africa, which sails for Liverool to-day, will carry out about \$600,000 in specie. A serious election fraud has just been discovered, resulting in the binding over for trial of the judges of the 1st district of the 20th ward, William Turner, Wm. Murray, and Hugh Mooney, on the charge of having tickets rinted after the election with the name of "C. Tucker" on them, which they put in the box, taking out a similar number of those for Cummings A. Tucker, the Whig candidate for Assembly, and thus electing William McConkey, the Democratic candidate, by ten majority.

[Corr. Baltimore American.

The steamer Africa, which sailed from New York for iverpool on Wednesday, took out \$500,000, mostly in FREESOIL DEMOCRACY.

The miserable trick of the " Union" and its co-workers to draw off the attention of the public from the Freesoil appointments of the Administration, by charging similar coalitions upon their opponents, cannot deceive any intelligent and well-informed mind at this day, however it has been usual to bestow upon it, may prove beneficial. may have misled heretofore. The thing has been too thoroughly exposed. What astonishes us most, however, is the fact that Southern Democratic journals and partisans can have the cool hardihood to coalesce with the Freesoilers while affecting such deep-rooted hostility to them and their principles. And this coalition, too, is in opposition to the true and tried friends of the South-men who stood firmly by the South, her rights and interests, at the hour when she and the Union most needed their support and succor. It is such men as these that Southern Democratic organs and partisans, in their zeal to supscientific character, and few teachers were competent to port the Administration and their eager rush for the spoils, would crush and trample down to sustain and uphold Freesoilers. Dickinson and his associates, the faithful allies of the South, men who sacrificed themselves at home, fell fighting in the front ranks of the defenders of the constitutional rights of the South, are denounced and plied? Ten being the base of the system of notation and prostrated to elevate the VAN BURENS and their Freesoil comrades. These are truths known to every well-informed mind. Let the people pause and ponder upon them ere they enlist under the banner of an Administration that [Augusta (Geo.) Chronicle.

## THE SANDWICH ISLANDS.

Our contemporaries are very extensively discussing the position of the Sandwich Islands affairs. And we are surprised to find how easily some of them-very judicious and sensible writers too-fall in with the notion that the independence of the islands cannot long be maintained: and that it is therefore desirable, as the islands must fall into somebody's hands, that they should be annexed to the United States. Why should it be believed so readily that these islands caunot retain their independent national existence? Why, we are told' the natives are rapidly dying away, and the race will soon be extinct. Well, suppose this to be true-though we believe the danger to be much exaggerated-it will require many years to depopulate these islands of the native inhabitants; and in the mean time other inhabitants will be gradually gathering at the islands to occupy the vacant places made by death; and why may not the present independence of the Hawaiian kingdom be continued in those who may succeed the present inhabitants of the islands? We can see no reason why, but in the restless, fillibustering spirit of a portion of the Universal Yankee Nation. It is manifestly for the interest of the commercial world that these islands, directly in the track of the trade between China and the Western World, and so conveniently located and adapted to accommodate the whalers and other ships which so frequently visit the Pacific and Arctic oceans, should remain independent and open ports for all the shipping of the world; and all the great marine Powers of the world would doubtless readily unite in a guaranty of this independence, if the scheming Yankees of the islands would allow matters to take their natural course. Our own convictions are most decidedly that the only reason why annexation to the United States is deemed so necessary by certain American residents on the Sandwich Islands is, that such a step would subserve their private interests .- Boston Traveller.

## TALBOT'S TUNNELLING MACHINE.

The successful operation of this ponderous mechanical ngine has at length demonstrated the feasibility of excavating rock and tunnelling through mountains by means of machinery. The slow and expensive process of per-forating by means of the drill and blast will soon be done away with forever, the dangerous force of ganpowder being superseded by the equally resistless but more manageable agency of steam. Mr. Talbot's invention, unlike that employed fruitlessly upon the Hoosac tunnel, entirely dispenses with the blast—the whole excavation, seventeen feet in diameter, being made simply by cutting and crushing the rock. The cutting tool, as in the case of the Hoosac machine, is the well-known invention of Charles Wilson, which has long been employed to advantage, both in this city and elsewhere, in the business of dressing stone for building purposes. This, however, is the first instance, it is believed, in which it has been successfully applied to boring or excavating. Mr. Wilson's invention consists simply of a rotating disc of steel, with its periphery or cutting edge properly adapted to cut away the surface of stone by rolling against it. Mr. Talbot's machine applies sets or series of these rotating we used to be taught differently, and, in our simplicity, ner that they describe in their action a segment of a circle discs to the surface of a rock or mountain, in such a manfrom the centre to the circumference of the tunnel to b sult would be different, ; and also that what was taught excavated, in combination with a slow motion around said centre; while, at the same time, the entire machine which carries the cutters advances forward in the direction of machine. I should be gratified to learn what the more their work as the face of the rock is cut away by the operecent experiments are from which are deduced this new law promulgated in this system of mechanical philosophy.

Very respectfully your obedient servant,

E. the different sets of cutters to act in succession on the entire surface of the proposed excavation.

A machine embodying the features of this invention, and constructed for the purpose of experimentally testing its value, has just been erected upon the line of the Harlem railway, about seven miles distant from the city. It was built by Messrs. Woodruff & Beach, machinists, at Hartford, Connecticut, under the immediate supervision of the inventor. It is composed entirely of iron, and weighs, exclusive of the steam-engine and boiler employed to operate it, upwards of seventy tons. Through the courtesy of the proprietors we witnessed its operations a day or two since, and were as much gratified by the successful issue of its conflict with the rock as by the wonderful ingenuity and mechanical skill displayed in its contrivance and construction. The rock to which it is applied, in point of texture and compact solidity, scarcely yields precedence to the hardest granite. It is therefore admirably adapted to test the power and capacity of the ma-chine. The position of the rock was such that the ma-chine approached it, of necessity, in the first instance, in an oblique direction. Its face, too, was inclined from an exact perpendicular, the base projecting forward several feet further than the summit. At first, therefore, the sectors, or arms which carry the cutters, did not all strike upon the surface to be cut, and the machine accordingly operated at disadvantage, the opposition being but partial and the strain unequal. So massive, however, was the structure that the shock was soarcely perceptible massive, however, was and the huge arms seemed to advance through the oppos ing rock with a motion as facile and regular as that of their neighbors, which played unresisted in the air above. Slowly but steadily and unflinchingly the cutters describ ed their curve; the great face plate, seventeen feet in diameter, revolved; and the machine advanced, throwing diameter, revolved; and the machine auvanced, and out and drawing in its arms, like the claws and feelers of an immense iron lobster, at every motion grappling with an immense iron lobster, and crumbling successive inches of the everlasting rock, and crumbling successive inches of it into dust. It was a spectacle to be contemplated in si lent admiration, almost with awe and wonder.

The machine has now advanced about twenty feet beyond the point where it originally struck the rock at its base, and is already operating with all its cutters upon the entire surface to be cut away. It goes forward from five to six inches per hour. Only four men are required in operating it, two of whom are employed exclusively upon the steam-engine by which it is propeiled; and there would appear to be no reason why the work should be suspended day or night, save at occasional intervals for the purpose of sharpening the cutters.

The immense importance and value of such an inven-tion readily suggests itself to the mind. In all the various departments of civil engineering its want is felt, and the best mechanical talent of the land has long been seeking for a solution of the problem it so fully elucidates. The public are indebted for its development to CHAS T. SHELTON, Esq., who has been identified with stone-cutting machinery from its infancy .- N. Y. Jour. of Commerce.

THE METEORS.-We watched for the annual meteoric shower on the evenings of the 18th and 14th, but saw nothing of the display. We remember most vividly the one that occurred on the 13th of November, 1833, which was one of the most wonderful ever recorded. The meteors seemed to fall as thick as flakes of snow in a snowstorm, and many thousands were seen in the course of a few hours. Muller calculates that in nine hours no less than two hundred and forty thousand fell. Many persons, much frightened at beholding the stars falling, as they conceived, to the earth, supposed that the day of final judgment was about to come, and were relieved when a clear and serene day dawned and the phenomenon ceased. But such estimates are general, vague, and unsatis-factory. Such was the rapidity with which they fell that no one could count them; and such the vast expanse of the heavens which they covered that no estimate could approximate to the truth. We witnessed them for several hours from an eligible point on the top of one of the highest buildings in the city. The whole heavens, east, west, north, and south, from the "zenith to the nadir," were covered with them, and they retired only before the light of the uprising sun. The spectacle was one of the most grand and sublime we ever looked upon.